

The Old Stone House
Valley Road
Liberty Corner, Somerset County, New Jersey

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PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA
District of New Jersey

Historic American Buildings Survey
Seymour Williams, F.A.I.A., District Officer
133 Central Avenue, Rahway, New Jersey

The Old Stone House
Valley Road
Liberty Corner, Somerset County, New Jersey

Owner: W. B. Self

Date of Erection: 1764; frame addition 1858

Architect:

Builder: John Van Compen (Probable)

Present Condition: Good

Number of Stories: Main two stories; wing one

Materials of Construction: Foundation - stone

Exterior walls - stone;
wing frame construction,
stuccoed

Interior walls - plaster

Inside brick chimneys

Roof - pitch with dormers
of later date

Historical Data:

This house has a datestone on the east gable which reads "J. M. V. 1764". According to the Elizabethtown Bill of Chancery James Alexander was the owner of the tract in 1747. Alexander according to the records of the land patents north of the Raritan River in Somerset County, owned about eighteen hundred acres

alone and about thirty-five hundred acres in partnership with Dunstar.

The datestone would indicate that a Van Compen was the builder of the house; however, there are no records to indicate how the Van Compens came into possession of the land. There is proof through a will of John Van Compen dated May 3, 1745, now in the Secretary of State's Office, that the Van Compen family was in this vicinity. This will mentions a son John who was given the best mare in consideration of his birthright as the eldest son and also as a bar against any pretense of being an heir-at-law. However, John Sr., had another son Jacob who died before the will was made and who had two children one of whom was also named John. It is assumed that this John, the grandson, was the builder of this house.

Locally, it is known as The Old Stone House and in the county histories there is reference to a Stone House which was erected by William Antrim at Liberty Corner. This house at Liberty Corner was torn down about forty or fifty years ago and the name apparently has been applied to the house of the survey, but actually the Old Stone House of the county histories was about three miles up the road on the other side of Liberty Corner.

The earliest record of ownership obtainable in Somerset County pertains to the year 1805 when Charles Layton transferred the property to Skilemon Doughty. Two years later Doughty gave title to Moses Paroil or Parcel who sold in 1817 to Isaac Fitz Randolph. There are several transfers recorded between 1821 and 1857 when Isaac Fitz Randolph sold to Andrew Compton, but these were transfers mostly for debt reasons. It was Andrew Compton who built the frame piece on the west elevation. After his death the property came into the possession of Mary E.

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and John H. Nelson; this was in 1897. Mary E. Nelson was a daughter of Andrew Compton. Nelson sold in 1902 to Randolph Ciddis who in 1907 gave title to Olivet M. Kenworthy. Two years later M. Florence Brown et als are listed as owners.

The tax map shows the present owner to be W. B. Self, but as far as the court records at Somerville are concerned, the present owner is still M. Florence Brown et als. There is no record of what happened to the property from 1909 to the present other than the cancellation of a mortgage in 1910.

Bibliography:

Honeyman, A. Van Doren (Editor) Northwestern New Jersey 4 Volumes New York and Chicago, Lewis Historical Publishing Company, 1927

Honeyman, A. Van Doren (Editor) "Earliest American Ancestors of Somerset Families" Somerset County Historical Quarterly Volume V, Number 2

Snell, J. P. (Compiler) History of Hunterdon and Somerset Counties, New Jersey Philadelphia, Everts and Peck, 1881

Information from Mrs. John H. Nelson former owner and daughter of Andrew Compton

A search of Somerset County court records by Frank P. Caufield, Essex County Office

A search of records in the Secretary of State's Office, Trenton, by Robert M. Falcey, Mercer County Office

Walter E. Pitt
Supervising Historian

Approved:

Seymour Williams
SEYMOUR WILLIAMS, F.A.I.A.
District Officer

reviewed - July 1938

A D D E N D U M

Further examination requires the following restatements:

This house stands at the southwest corner of the intersection of the Kind's Road from New Providence and the Valley Road from Liberty Corner, at a place named Stone Bridge on present road maps in Bernards Township, Somerset County. Maps of 1850 call it Stone House.

The datestone in the apex of the east gable end shows by the inscribed initials and figures that this house was erected in 1764 for J-- M-- and wife C-- or V-- (the letters V and C being cut one on the other, possibly as a correction). The identity of this first owner has escaped discovery in the county archives. The earliest deed on record is one of April 1, 1805 by which Charles Layton and wife Nancy of this Township of Bernards conveyed to Skillman Doughty of same place for \$2000, a tract of thirty-five acres on the west side of the "road from Baskenridge to Stoney Hill meeting house", and transversed East to West by an intersecting road (now Valley Road), but without reciting grantors' title. The said Skillman Doughty and wife Hannah, of same township, conveyed by deed of 16 March 1807 to Moses Parsels for \$1200 part of this tract, the twenty-three acres bounded east by the road from Basking Ridge and north by the Valley Road, and on which this stone house stands. Parsels and wife, Rhoda, of this township, conveyed to Isaac Fitz Randolph of same place for \$1600 the said twenty-three acres with the buildings by their deed of 27 March 1817, and the estate of Fitz Randolph by theirs of 9 April 1822 conveyed the same to Oliver Stelle, describing it as "the Stone House", and the last named reconveyed it to Fitz Randolph on 25 March 1857 for \$1240 bid at a public sale held on the premises, the latter being resident therein then. Fitz Randolph then conveyed it on 30 March 1857 to Andrew Compton who resided in this house, and made the frame addition to it, until his death in 1897, after which his widow, Catherine W., then of Summit, Union County, and other heirs, conveyed the house and its remaining $4\frac{1}{2}$ acres of land to one of her daughters Mary E. Nelson and husband on 5 April 1897, for \$1000. By deed of 11 April 1928 the last named couple transferred the house

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and lot to the Century Corporation (W. B. Self)
the present owner.

This house is not to be confused with
that other "Stone House" erected in 1766 for
William Annin some three miles west at Liberty
Corner and since demolished which is mentioned
in Snell's History of Hunterdon and Somerset
Counties.

Bibliography:

Somerset County Deed Books:
D-727, D-847, I-645, K-489, Z-2-170,
Z-2-173, N-8-397 and H-21-268


HERBERT N. MOFFETT
Deputy District Officer